



No. 440.

Deposited July 5th 1865

~~D. W. E. GUTHRIE~~

proprietor

THE

STRICTURES OF LABIENUS,

The Historical Critic in the Time of Augustus,

BY M. A. ROGEARD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

DR. W. E. GUTHRIE.

*Original
MS. Ac. 2. v. 1. p. 100.*

PHILADELPHIA:

T. B. PUGH, No. 600 CHESTNUT STREET,
1865.

SUPERIORS OF JESUITOS

aníbal e cada um de seus membros.

THE
STRICTURES OF LABIENUS,

The Historical Critic in the Time of Augustus,

Louis
BY M. A. ROGEARD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

DR. W. E. GUTHRIE. *D^r Arusmont*

*25-10
5345*



PHILADELPHIA:
T. B. PUGH, No. 600 CHESTNUT STREET,
1865.

17 Fe 8 A.K.

DC279
RG

SEARCHED AND SERIALIZED FEBRUARY 1968

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1865, by
DR. W. E. GUTHRIE,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern
District of Pennsylvania.

30165



17 Fe 8 A.M.
a.m. Jan 16, 1922

P R E F A C E.

Since this pamphlet appeared, I have heard different persons, high-toned gentlemen doubtless, exclaim that it is but a slander against a worthy and noble gentleman, that all its merit consists in being well written. That it is a slander . . . I concede; for France owes so much to the new Augustus, Louis Napoleon! think of it:

He abolished passports when for a long time it was no longer possible to enforce their usage. Certainly that great man wishes well! What liberty now everywhere all enjoy under his shield!

Some one hundred thousand men had already united in an expression of condolence and regret, and wished to give two cents each to send a fitting testimony to the widow of a man who had dared in his high position to place his happiness in the fulfillment of his duties, and who was murdered when his face was beaming with joy, for it had been granted him to succeed in bringing back peace among his people.* Evidently France was in danger. Such an example! It cannot be allowed that, it may become a necessity to be unassuming and honest to get a medal or a testimony after death. Such things, medals—to have one's face stamped forever on silver or gold as Caesar had—medals are evidently the specialty and privilege only of great men. It was then befitting a just and dignified government, as is, just now, the government of France, to protect privileges and propriety, and above all, public morals; that a good people may not be deceived, money and feelings wasted, when government knows so much better how to appropriate them.

France was evidently in danger, and France was saved again: the money and men who dared such a scandal were saved, and morality vindicated!

DR. W. E. CUTHRIE.

PHILADELPHIA, June 30th, 1865.

* We read in the Tribune of June 16th:

THE FRENCH SUBSCRIPTION FOR MRS. LINCOLN.—The following information has been received in this city: "Recently a popular subscription of two cents a head was commenced at Nantes, in France, for a gold medal for Mrs. Lincoln. This medal was to bear the following inscription:

"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

"To Lincoln, twice chosen President of the United States,

"From the grateful Democracy of France.

"Lincoln, the Honest, abolished Slavery, re-established the Union, Saved the Republic without Vailing the Statue of Liberty.

"He was Assassinated the 14th of April, 1865.

"About the 30th of April, when the number of the subscriptions had reached 11,120, the subscriptions were seized by the police, who stated that the scheme was to be stopped everywhere in France."

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MIDDLE AGES
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE RENAISSANCE
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MODERN AGE
BY JAMES LEONARD

INTRODUCTION
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MIDDLE AGES
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE RENAISSANCE
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MODERN AGE
BY JAMES LEONARD

INTRODUCTION
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MIDDLE AGES
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE RENAISSANCE
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MODERN AGE
BY JAMES LEONARD

CONTINUATION OF THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MIDDLE AGES
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE RENAISSANCE
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MODERN AGE
BY JAMES LEONARD

INTRODUCTION
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MIDDLE AGES
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE RENAISSANCE
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MODERN AGE
BY JAMES LEONARD

INTRODUCTION
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MIDDLE AGES
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE RENAISSANCE
BY JAMES LEONARD
WITH A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE MODERN AGE
BY JAMES LEONARD

THE STRICTURES OF LABIENUS.

THE HISTORICAL CRITIC IN THE TIME OF AUGUSTUS.

THIS happened in the seventh year after Christ, in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Augustus, seven years before his death; it was in full tide of the principate, the people had a master.

Having slowly emerged from that vapor of blood which had empurpled its dawn, the star of Julius was rising and shedding a soft light on the silent forum. It was a fine time! The Curia* was silent, and the laws were being made; there was no more curiat or centuriat comitia; no more rogations, provocations, secessions, plebiscites†; no more elections, no more disorder; no longer any army of the Republic, *nulla publica arma*; every where Roman peace conquered over the Romans; there was only one tribune, Augustus; only one army, the army of Augustus; only one will, his; only one consul, he; only one censor, he yet; only one pretor, he, always he. Eloquence, proscribed, was going to die in the shadow of the schools; literature was expiring under the protection of Mæcenas†; Livy ceased to write; Labeo§, to speak; the reading of Cicero was prohibited; society was saved. As for glory, they doubtless had it as befits an empire which respects itself. There had been a little tilting every where; people had been beaten north and south, right and left, sufficiently; there were names to be inscribed on the cor-

* Curia, subdivision of a Roman empire.

† Plebiscites, decree emanated from the Roman people convoked assembled by tribes.

‡ Mæcenas, protector of letters and arts.

§ Labeo, a distinguished legisl.

ners of streets and on triumphal arches; nations were vanquished to be enchain'd on bas-reliefs; there were the Dalmatians, the Cantabrians, Aquitains and Panonians; there were the Illyrians, Rhetians, Vindelicians, Salasses and the Dacians; the Ubians, the Sicambrians, and the E. thians, dream of Cæsar; without counting the Romans of the civil wars, over whom Augustus had the audacity to triumph contrary to custom, but on horseback only, by modesty. There had even been one of those wars in which the Emperor commanded in person and was wounded, which is the height of glory for a great nation.

In the meantime, the Sestertes* were pouring down upon the people; the prince multiplied distributions—it might be said that these cost him nothing—he distributed, distributed, distributed; he was so good, that he even gave to little children under twelve years of age, contrary to the law. It is becoming to violate law, when one is better than the law.

The only embarrassment the people suffered, was in the choice of amusements: there were theatricals, gladiatorial performances, sports of the forum and of the amphitheatre, circuses, nautical and Trojan games, not to mention races, hunts, and athletic wrestlings, and without prejudice to exhibitions of the rhinoceros, tigers, and of serpents of fifty cubits in length. Never had the Roman people been so much amused. Add, also, that the prince frequently passed in review the cavaliers, and that he loved to renew often the ceremony of the defiling of troops, a majestic spectacle if not diversified, and which it would be unjust to omit in the enumeration of the pleasures which he lavished upon the rulers of the world. As to himself, his pleasures were simple, and, if it were not that he gave, perhaps too often, the legitimate place of Scribonia or of Livy, either to Drusula, or Tertulla, or Terentilla, or Rufilla, or Salvia Titiscenia, or to others; and that he had the bad taste, in absolute famine, to banquet too joyously, disguised as a god, with eleven cronies, deified like himself; and that he loved a little too violently the fine furniture and beautiful vases of Corinth, and to such a degree as sometimes to kill the

* Silver Roman coin.

owner to get the vase ; and that he was as much a gambler as dice themselves ; and that he was always a little inclined to the vice of his uncle ; and that, in his old age, his taste having become more delicate, he would no longer admit to the honor of his intimacy any but virgins, and that the care of introducing to him the said virgins was entrusted to his wife Livia, who, nevertheless, acquitted herself with great zeal of this little employment ; if it were not for that and some inconsiderable commendations which are not worth even the trouble of mentioning, Suetonius asserts that his life was well-ordered and screened from all reproach. Therefore, it was a happy epoch, that Julian era ; it was a great age, that Augustan age ; and it was not without reason that Virgil, a little dispossessed at first, but afterwards indemnified, exclaims : "It is the reign of Saturn that is coming again."

There was, here and there, it is true, some shade in the picture ; there had been a dozen plots, as many seditions, and these mar a reign. It was the Republicans who came back. There had been as many of them as could be killed at Pharsalia,* Thapsus, Munda, Philippi, Actium and Alexandria, and in Sicily ; for Roman liberty was so tenacious of life, that not less than seven wholesale butcheries were requisite to disable it ; legions seemed to rise from the earth according to Pompey's prayer ; these ever-returning Republicans had been conscientiously killed—but how many ? Three hundred thousand, perhaps, at the most ; that was well, but it was not enough ; there were still some of them left. Hence, the life of this great man was not free from some little vexations. In the Senate he was obliged to wear a cuirass and a sword under his robe, (which is inconvenient, especially in hot countries,) and to surround himself with ten stout fellows whom he called his friends, but who, nevertheless, were irksome companionship to him.

There were also those three cohorts which dragged behind him their old iron, in that same city in which, sixty years before, they were not permitted to enter with even a little knife ; that was enough to give rise to some doubts upon the popularity of the father of the country. There

*The battle of Pharsalia.

was afterwards Agrippa, who demolished too much: but it was necessary to make a tomb of marble for this great people that wished to die. There was yet the Prefect of Lyons, Lycinius, who ground down his province too much; he did not know how to shear the beast without making it bleat; he was an ignorant and rough administrator, who was contented to take money wherever it was, *i. e.*, in pockets, proceeding unceremoniously, but lacking genius in the execution. It was he who conceived the idea of adding two months to the calendar, in order to make his good city pay the monthly tax twice more in the year. However, it must be acknowledged that he shared equitably with his master the product of his administration.

The good people of Lyons, not knowing how to tear off this blood-sucker from the skin, had the simplicity to ask Cæsar to recall their Prefect, who was sustained.

There was also a certain distant expedition, of which there was not great reason to be proud; the unfortunate Varus had stupidly permitted himself to be crushed with three legions, some where over the Rhine, in the depth of the Hercynian forest. That had a bad effect. War is like all good things—it must not be abused. It has the merit of being the most absorbing spectacle, the most powerful of diversions, I concede it, but it is a resource which must be used with caution. That insolent and terrible game must not be played too often, as it may turn against him who plays it; and when one is a savior, it does not become him to send the people whom he has saved to the slaughter without due consideration. This might be said, but who then thought of it? Scarcely twenty thousand mothers—and what is that in a great empire? Glory, it is well-known, does not give her favors, and Rome was rich enough in blood and money to pay for them. Augustus, to clear himself, had but to beat his head softly against the doors, and to make a prosoposia which, besides, has become classical.

There was finally Lolius, who had lost an eagle, but they could do without him; and as for the finances, a new era had just been opened, the great administration had been invented, and the world was going to be administered;

the monster empire, with a hundred million hands and one belly; the unity was founded! I will work with your hands, and you will digest with my stomach; that is clear, and Meneas was right, and I have nothing to do with the advice of the peasant of the Danube.

If that system brought some abuses with it, if there was from time to time a famine, it was but a cloud to the sunshine of universal joy, a discordant note which was lost in the concert of public gratitude; and all these little ills, which now and then ruffled the surface of the empire, were in reality but happy contrasts and piquant diversions reserved to a happy people by their good fortune, to give them rest from happiness and time to breathe; it was as seasoning to the entertainment; just enough to break the monotony of success to temper hilarity, and avert satiety. People were stifling with prosperity; for there are benefits which overpower, and joys which carry death with them.

Who then, in that golden age, who then, could complain? Tacitus says that, seven years later, at the death of Augustus, but few citizens remained who had seen the Republic; there remained fewer still who had served it; they had been carried off by civil wars or proscriptions, by summary execution, assassination or exile, want or despair . . . time had done the rest; there remained yet some sorrowing spirits, some morose old men; and as to those who had come into the world since Actium, they were born with an image of the emperor in their eyes, and they could not see clearer; there was cause for hoping at least that they would be prepared to find the new face of things beautiful, and even the most beautiful of any thing, having never seen any other. Therefore, the vulgar herd of Remus was content, and all was at the best in the best of empires.

At this time lived Labienus. Do you know Labienus? He was a strange man, of a singular turn of mind. Just imagine that he persisted in remaining a citizen in a city where there was no longer any thing but subjects. Can that be comprehended? *Civis Romanus sum*, was he repeating, and it was not possible to bring him off that assumed ground. He wanted, like Cicero, to die free in a

free country. Can one imagine such extravagance? Citizen, and free! Oh! madness! Doubtless he was saying this as Polyeuctus said at a later time: "I am a Christian!" without well knowing what he was saying. The truth was, his poor head was diseased, his brain dangerously affected—at least this was the opinion of the doctor of Augustus, the celebrated Antonius, who called this kind of madness, reasoning monomania, and who had prescribed its being treated with imprisonment. Labienus had not followed the prescription, and hence he was not cured, as you will see when I have brought you to a better acquaintance with him.

Labienus was bearing a name already twice honored by good citizens. The first Labienus, a lieutenant of Cæsar, had quitted him at the time of the passage of the Rubicon, in order not to be an accomplice of his outrage; the second preferred to serve the Parthians to the triumviri; our hero was the third one. A line from Seneca, the rhetorician, suffices to give us a glimpse of that grand figure, for we find there this bold word of Labienus: "I know that what I am writing can be read only after my death." An orator and historian of the first rank, and having come up to glory through a thousand obstacles, it was said of him that he had extorted rather than obtained admiration. He was then writing a history of which he sometimes read, with closed doors, a few pages to some trusty friends. It was with reference to this history that the condemnation of books to the flames was applied for the first time, upon motion of a senator, who was himself punished, some time after, with the penalty he had invented; and so Labienus was the first in Rome who had thus the honor, which afterwards became common, of an incendiary *senatus-consultum*. It is what Mr. Egger judiciously terms: "The new difficulties to which the imperial regime gives birth for history." The poor executed historian, smelling yet the smoke of the funeral pyre, not being able to survive his burned work, went out and shut himself up in the tomb of his ancestors, never more to go out from it. He believed his work annihilated, but it was not. Cassius knew it by heart, and Cassius, protected by exile, was, as

nce? Citi-
was saying
Christian!"
The truth
dangerously
e doctor of
d this kind
d prescribed
us had not
ot cured, as
er acquaint-

honored by
nt of Cæsar,
he Rubicon;
; the second
ri; our hero
rhetorician,
gure, for we
ow that what
' An orator
come up to
l of him that
on. He was
es read, with
ends. It was
lemination of
t time, upon
d, some time
so Labienus
, which after-
senatus-con-
terms: "The
e gives birth
smelling yet
le to survive
lf up in the
from it. He
not. Cassius
exile, was, as

he himself said, a living edition of the book of his friend, an edition they could not burn. No doubt the death of Labienus was as senseless as his life. A book burned—a fine affair! does one kill himself for that? The senate did not desire the death of the guilty man, it only wished to give him a warning; he ought to have profited by it; but this man took every thing the wrong way, and always heard wrong when he heard at all. He was well worthy to figure in that long defile of stoical suicides which had commenced, and among all those heroic simpletons, all those systematic and radical, enraged and absurd opponents who made of their death even a last act of opposition, and conceived themselves, by opening their veins, to be playing a trick on the emperor. Some killed themselves solely to enrage the prince, who laughed in his sleeve, and was only the more persuaded of the excellence of his policy, by seeing that his work was being done without his help. Labienus belonged to these; you see clearly that he was an imbecile; such was the man whose "Propos" * we wish to repeat to you, and you will see that in his conversation, as in his life and death he was always the same—that is, incorrigible. He was a man of the old party, since the Republic had passed away; a reactionist, since the Republic was a thing of former times; a ci-devant of the old system, since the government of the laws was the system of past times: in a word, he was a dolt.

He was one of those wicked ones who ought to tremble under a strong government, that the good may be reassured, and that society, shaken even to its foundations, may settle down again upon its basis. This is not all, Labienus was ungrateful: in full cæsarism, in full glory, in the midst of that superabundance of public felicity, and that immense feast of the human kind, he failed to recognize the blessings which the second founder of Rome, the pacificator of the world, bestowed with full hands; he had at the same time blind and hostile passions, which make dangerous men and baleful citizens. But you do not know him yet. His passion, wanting air and space in the suffocation of the principate, being able

* Strictures.

neither to speak nor write, to act or move, he spent whole hours on the Tiblicius bridge seeing the Tiber run, motionless and silent, but with fierce aspect, menacing gesture, and breast distended with the spirit of the ancient days, like a statue of the avenger Mars, like a petrified tribune. "It is sweet to sleep, or to be a stone, as long as misery or shame continue," said Michael Angelo. Labienus did not sleep, but he was stony, harder than the rock of the Capitol, *immobile saxum*. Tyranny had no hold upon him, and the empire in its power was unable to reach him; he was a Roman of the old stamp upon which nothing could make an impression. Alone, upright, like Cocles, between an army and a precipice, he defied both; he defied Augustus and laughed at death. In all this there was some good, if you will; but, on the other hand, what a detestable character, what a deformed mind! Octavius had been fortunate to stamp a superb medal with the three intertwined hands of the triumvirs, and this sublime legend: "The salvation of mankind." That still displeased him; he pretended he had been saved in spite of himself, and he quoted the verse from Horace:

"When to be thus saved I have no design,
To the devil the savior, who is but an assassin."

Old Labienus was one of those who had seen the Republic; he was foolish enough to remember it, and there was the misfortune. He beheld now a great reign, and he was not satisfied. There are some people who never are; he was always believing himself to be yet at the day after Pharsalia; forty years of glory were there before his eyes without opening them; he had the air of a man who has had an evil dream, and the reality to him was but an infernal vision. He expressed artless astonishment; he would not believe that such an era of glory had been. Epiminides, who slept a hundred years, when he awoke was less astonished. Sad in the universal joy, gloomy amidst the Roman orgies, like the two philosophers of Couture's picture, he was there and seemed to live elsewhere; he was a spectre in a festival; you might say a corpse escaped from the tombs of Philippi, a curious shade which comes to look about. Sometimes a friend

pitied him; him! he pitied his friend. More often, all alone, he was muttering in his corner, looking upon the empire passing away. It was not possible to make such a man listen to reason; he was of another age, an exile in the new age; he had nostalgia of the past; he had learned nothing and forgotten nothing; he understood nothing of the present epoch; he had all the prejudices of Brutus and was tainted with Greek opinions which had not been current in Rome for a long time. His manner was old as the Twelve Tables; he thought still as people thought in the time of Fabricius or the hairy Camillus, and had, moreover, fantastic ideas and incredible manias, and especially an odd taste, strange and inexplicable . . . he loved liberty! Evidently, T. Labienus had no common sense. To love liberty! Can you understand such a thing? It was a retrograde opinion, for liberty was old, and the new men liked the new system. He had no perception of shades, no notion of time, no apprehension of transitions. The times had marched on, and ideas also; he alone remained planted there as a term; he still believed in justice, laws, in science and conscience—evidently he was in his dotage. He spoke of honest men like Cicero, he spoke of the senate, tribune, comitia; and did not see that all these had melted away like snow in the immense sewer, and that he was almost alone on the bank. He was still counting years by the consuls, for Augustus had left the name to keep up a belief in the thing, and he hoped to resuscitate the thing in preserving the name. He was preparing discourses to the people, as if there was a people, invoking laws, as if there were laws. The principle was to him but a parenthesis of history, a disgraceful page of Roman annals; he was eager to turn the page or tear it out; he was ever saying that it would come to an end, and he believed it; the people called him a fool, and so he was, as you see. After all, a good man; obstinate rather than wicked; incapable of killing a chicken, or wishing the least evil to any one, if we except Augustus, and yet! . . . He was so mild, that he would only have sent him to the galleys, to turn a grindstone, contrary to a more common opinion of those who wanted

to nail him to the cross. He thought, moreover, with the stoics, that punishment is good for criminals; and he wished Augustus the only good that could happen to him — expiation.

One day, as he was walking under the portico of Agrippa, he met Gallio. Gallio was a young sage, while Labienus was an old fool. He was a serious and mild young man well educated and elegant, polite, circumspect and prudent, and a moderate stoic; Spaniard and Roman, citizen and subject, a man of two epochs and two countries; mixed blood and crossed opinion; a little of this and a little of that; sometimes, like Horace, turning his softened eyes on the tomb of liberty; and bringing them back not less softened on the cradle of the empire; giving a tear to Cato, and a smile to Cæsar; a benevolent character, loving everybody a little, even Labienus. He was a brother of Seneca, who dared not live, and uncle of Lucan who knew not how to die; there were no longer but moieties of heroism, and some fragments of greatness, a people in ruins before its temples; here and there yet some half-Romans. Gallio wrote some verses for the favorite of Mecenus, and critics called him the ingenious Gallio. Finally he had intellect, for he was proconsul. It was from him that the indifferent in religious matters were named Galianists; he could have been a little patron of the same sort in political matters. It was for that Labienus reproached him. And I believe the gloomy pedestrian was going to pass without caring to recognize him, for Labienus was not amiable; he was but little more affable than those famous senators who, proudly seated in the middle of the forum, one day received so coldly the Gauls. So Gallio would not expose himself to the hazard of caressing his beard; but the young man was so pleased, so excited with emotion, wanted so much to find some one to whom he could tell the great news he had just learned, so curious to see the effect of it on Labienus, that he approached him and said:

— Good day, Titus! *quid agis, dulcissime rerum,* How dost thou do?

— Unwell indeed, if the empire is well.

— Well, we know thou art always in bad humor; but I have some news to tell thee.

— There is no news for me so long as Augustus reigns.

— Come, I know thou hast been in a passion for thirty years, and that thou hast not laughed once since the triumvirate; but here is my news: the Memoirs of Augustus have just appeared.

— And how long since brigands have been making books?

— Since honest men have made emperors.

— Alas!

— So, my dear Titus, thou wilt not read these Memoirs?

— I will read them, Gallio, I will read them, crying with shame.

— And thou wilt answer them, criticise them, and make an anti-Cæsar, as Cæsar has made an anti-Cato?

— No, Gallio, I shall publish nothing on this subject; I do not discuss with him who has thirty legions; in a country that is not free, one ought to forbid himself to touch upon contemporary history, and criticism, in such a matter is impossible.

— Thou wilt not, then, enlighten the public?

— I shall not contribute to deceive it; for in these times, on such subjects, nothing which appears can be good, and nothing which is good can appear. I will continue my secret history, the leaves of which I will send to Severius, in a safe place; I will save the truth by exiling it.

— But we are assured that criticism will be free; tyranny would give literature a week's holiday.

— They can give but a false liberty, a liberty of December, that is, a carnival of liberty, *libertas decembris*, as Horace says; I shall not make use of it. I shall not, by writing against the book, find myself placed between the vengeance of Octavina and the clemency of Augustus, without even the choice. I shall not, like Cinna, give the scoundrel the occasion of playing the magnanimous, and to be executed by grace. As to praising the book, I can only if it be good, in which case, I would fear to be confounded with those who praise it from other motives. It is to me, therefore, as impossible to praise as to blame.

or, with the
s; and he
pen to him

of Agrippa,
e Labienus
young man
and prudent,
citizen and
ries; mixed
d a little of
ned eyes on
ck not less
g a tear to
eter, loving
t brother of
n who knew
moieties of
a people in
some half-
favorite of
ous Gallio.
oul. It was
atters were
e patron of
as for that
the gloomy
g to recog-
he was but
who, proudly
received so
e himself to
ng man was
much to find
s he had just
bienus, that

rerum, How

And moreover, the book is not good and cannot be. When a man is guilty enough to make himself king, and fool enough to make himself God, I think he cannot have all the qualities requisite for writing history.

Thou art sure before hand that he has neither good sense nor good faith; then what remains to him? He can neither know truth, nor tell it if he were knowing it; then what has that sceptre-bearer to do with the matter? And why does he take it into his head to write history? A king-historian ought to commence by abdicating. He has not done so; bad sign. Then I have read some passages of it. He justifies proscriptions and vindicates usurpation. That had to be so. And thou, Gallio, wouldest have me criticise this work of ignorance and lies, approved of by two thousand centurions, and recommended to the reading public by veterans. Criticism! siege thou oughtest to have said. And thou dost not see, my good little Gallio, that that is one of the best tricks the son of the banker ever played upon the sons of the she wolf, who alas! do not know how to bite, like their grandmother. Ah! Gallio, we are degenerated, we are Romans of the decadence, fallen from Caesar to Augustus; from Charybdis to Scylla; from strength to artifice; from the uncle to the nephew! Poh! No, I do not wish to fall into that literary ambush, nor be caught in that trap, nor above all, to cause others to fall in it; no, I shall not write on the 'Memoirs' of Augustus. The silence of the people is a lesson for kings. Labienus will give this lesson to Augustus.

Never fear, moreover, if thou wishest criticism on this little piece of imperial literature, if thou wishest nice appreciations, they will be given; if thou wishest for learned dissertations, it will shower with them. If thou wishest ingenious and piquant observations, sketches full of novelty, elegant and courteous discussions sustained in exquisite style by persons of the better class, thou wilt have them; if thou wantest kneeling controversy, and groveling rhetoric, and surprising epigrams whose points tickle instead of sting, and bites which are caresses, and bloody reproaches that give pleasure, and adorable gracefulness adroitly gliding under the appearance of a severe judg-

be. When
g, and fool
ot have all

either good
n? He can
ng it; then
tter? And
history? A
ng. He has
ne passages
usurpation.
st have me
roved of by
the reading
oughtest to
ittle Gallio,
the banker
ho alas! do
Ah! Gallio,
decadence,
is to Scylla;
he nephew!
ary ambush,
cause others
Memoirs' of
on for kings.

ism on this
est nice ap-
t for learned
hou wishest
full of nov-
ined in ex-
ou wilt have
nd groveling
oints tickle
and bloody
gracefulness
severe judg-

ment, and pretty little lovely words delicately enveloped in the folds of a ferocious and crabbed phrase, and bouquets flowers of latinity, and floods of mellifluous eloquence, and arguments presented on cushions and objections on a silver waiter, as a domestic presents a letter; nothing of all this will fail thee, my dear Gallio: we go to see the choir of the Muses of State dance, and it is Mecænus who will lead off the ballet. The chaste sisters have quitted Pindus* for mount Palatin, and Apollo has placed himself on the police. Therefore Augustus is sure of having a public, readers, judges, critics, copiers and commentators; there will be found people for that work. He who has made Virgils can make Aristarchuses;† he requires them, and he will have them!

Already literature is in mirth: Varius weeps with joy; Flavius stamps with tenderness; Rabirius prepares his tablets; Haterius will give a lecture, and Tarpa a declamation; Pompeius Macer‡ declares it is a fine day for morals, and orders three copies luxuriously finished for the three public libraries which he has just organized; Fenestella§ goes to add a volume to his literary history; Metellus, who writes the speech of the prince so well, will number the oratorical beauties of the book, and Verius, the grammarian, the grammatical beauties; Marathus, the historiographer, will give an analysis in the Court journal, and Athenodorus, the protege of Octavia, will furnish a paraphrase for ladies, and some explanatory references within the compass of the princesses; there are ten, I know thousands. All these people defile before the emperor, shouting with all their might, like knights on parade; he in the meantime will assume an attitude full of modesty and majesty; his gesture will say: "Enough!" his smile will say: "More!" and the crowd will make itself most beautifully hoarse. As he had the populace of the seven hills to applaud his acts, so he will have the populace of authors to laud his book; the plaudits are sure, but they can come from but one side; it is then a consequence, suf-

* Pindus, mountain consecrated to Apollo.

† Aristarchus, a severe Greek critic.

‡ Pompeius Macer, Latin poet, contemporary of Cleero.

§ Fenestella, Roman historian in the time of Augustus.

ficiently grotesque, of his unique literary position. The unfortunate man has not perhaps foreseen it, but I do not care; he will succeed by order, that is hard, but I cannot help it. Supreme power has some inconveniences for an author; all are not roses in the calling of an imperial writer. The ground is not tenable, and Virgil would have lost his Latin on it. But one must submit to the law he has himself made; and when shame is poured out, shame must be drunk. Behold, then, my dear Gallio; the feast is about to open; it will be noisy, and numerously attended; already the musicians are in their places, tune the instruments, and prelude the concert; look, then, and listen, if it is thy taste; I confess that the spectacle will not be without a certain attraction for those who can yet smile.

I know that the work will include the last civil war, and even the last year of Julius Cæsar. In good faith, my dear Gallio, canst thou take this in earnest? Augustus publishing a book on the revolution he has himself made! What can be said, in thy opinion, of a criminal who is publishing an apology of his own crime? In my judgment, he commits an outrage, more difficult, it is true, than the first; (for it is easier to commit a crime than to justify it;) but this second outrage, if more difficult, is also more condemnable and more fatal, for the victims are more numerous, and the consequences more durable. The first strikes at men's lives, the other at their conscience; the one kills the body, the other the mind; the one oppresses the present, the other the future. It is the *coup d'état* in morals, the creation of disorder, injustice systematized, the organization of evil, the promulgation of lawlessness, the proscription of truth, the definitive defeat of public reason, the general rout of ideas, an intellectual battle of Actium. It is the real crowning of an edifice of villainy and infamy; it is also the only one possible. Augustus' book, it is his life set up as an example, it is his ambition made innocent, his will formulated into a law; it is the code of malefactors, the bible of rogues—and it is such a book thou wishest to be publicly criticised under the régime of his good will and pleasure! Thou wouldest make a literary opposition to Augustus? Pooh! Criticism upon Octa-

tion. The
but I do not
ut I cannot
ences for an
erial writer.
have lost his
he has hu-
me must be
ast is about
ttended; al-
the instru-
nd listen, if
not be with-
smile.

civil war, and
od faith, my
? Augustus
mself made!
l who is pub-
y judgment,
rue, than the
to justify it;)
so more con-
more numer-
e first strikes
the one kills
esses the pre-
rat in morals,
d, the organi-
ness, the pro-
public reason,
le of Actium.
y and infamy;
' book, . . .
mbition made
is the code of
such a book
the regime of
ake a literary
n upon Octa-

vius! What derision! He has not made a criticism upon Cicero; he has killed him! What! the wretch who assassinates thee, would give thee a sermon on assassination; and before giving thee the last blow, asks thy opinion upon his little composition, but thy advice, well, completely unfeigned, upon its foundation and form, thy political and literary opinion; for he is an artist, and a good fellow, and he wants to know thy opinion of his work; and thou, simpleton like, thou wouldest give it to him, and, the knife on thy throat, thou goest on chatting gracefully with the executioner. Gallio, my friend, thou dost not think of this!

What wouldest thou say of Verres writing a book on ownership? Wouldest thou argue with him? Are the 'Memoirs' of Octavius any thing else? Is it not the theory of usurpation written by a usurper? It is a school of conspiracy opened by an unpunished conspirator.

The author after all can talk only about what he knows; he knows how to pillage a town, cut the throats of a senate, force open a treasury in a temple and rob Jupiter; he knows how to make false keys, false oaths, and false testaments; he knows how to lie at the Forum and at the Curia, how to corrupt electors or do without them, how to kill his wounded colleagues as at Modena, and how to proscribe en masse, and knows also other little games of princes; following the method of the first Cæsar, he knows how to borrow from one and lend to another, and make friends of both sides; he knows how with a vigorous spring to leap all barriers, and pass all Rubicons, and then with a supreme bound, rising above all laws human and divine, take the perilous leap, cut a caper, and come down a king. He knows how to do all this, but knows not a word of history, politics, or morality, except that it be that morale the morality of the Great which was taught in his family. Then nothing is found in his book that we need to know, and we find, in profusion, what it is dangerous to learn. He is fond of old words, old coins and old helmets, but he is not fond of old morals. Wouldest thou discuss with him some points of grammar, archaeology, or numismatics? Fool he, who would do him that honor. Thou

seen that this would be to fall into his trap and play into his hands. People of his sort feel, whatever they may do, that they are under the ban of society; they have removed themselves violently from it by crime, and they wish to re-enter it quietly by cunning. They have no longer but one ambition, to curry favor with honest people. For this purpose they take all disguises; they go seeking everywhere their poor lost honor; they are like crowned beggars asking for esteem from door to door: and that is the only alms which cannot be given them. This is the position of Augustus; this drinker of men's blood thirsts for but one thing now—praises; this robber of the empire of the world wishes to steal but one thing more—his rehabilitation. But he attempts the impossible. The impotent and desperate effort he makes to save some few morsels of his shipwrecked reputation, this supreme effort to hang his honor on a last branch, which is about to fall, this last struggle of Cæsar with public opinion, which is crushing him, has something lugubrious and comical about it, like the last grimace of a hanged man, or like the smile of a gladiator who wishes to die gracefully. Cæsar's book is the toilet of the condemned man, the bow of the criminal on the scaffold to the crowd, as he walks to his doom. It is the coquetry of his last day. Cæsar was so filthy that the executioner would not have liked to touch him, and he has scrubbed himself up a little to embrace death. And he asks for readers! the insolent wretch! Readers for Cæsar! What for? He dares in a preface to address questions to his readers; but it is the lictor who will answer them.

— While waiting for that answer, I will read the Memoirs of Augustus.

— And I, replied Labienus, I will read again the Libels of Cassius.